



Summer 2006

# **ZOOM**

## **IN ON THE USA**

A Monthly Publication of the USA Mission.

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*View up the Colorado River from Toroweap Overlook in the Western end of Grand Canyon N.P. NPS Photo*



## A Short Tour of American National Parks

Summer holidays are just the right time to set off on an journey to the national parks of the United States if only online. In this issue of Zoom, we take you on a tour of three national parks: **The Grand Canyon**, with its breathtaking scenery, **Yellowstone**, covered in steam from erupting geysers and, finally - for when you get too hot in the hot springs - the refreshingly cool Alaskan **Denali**.

We hope you enjoy the tour.

How does it feel to paddle in a small rubber boat, surrounded by walls of bare rock so tall that they seem to pierce the small scrap of sky over your head? The rocks cast a shadow, which envelops the banks, the water and your boat unless you keep right in the middle. How does it feel to listen to the echo of your own voice bouncing back and forth at the bottom of the canyon? It feels like you are a dwarf in a land of giants. The feeling is of awesomeness and insignificance. The atmosphere is of mystery.

How does it feel to stand alone on top of a mountain in all the brightness of the hot summer sun? To look down on tree tops so far below that they are almost indiscernible? To have all the wind that has just swept the vastness of the empty spaces blow straight in your face? The smell in the air is of freedom, the feeling is of power, the experience can be life-changing.

The Grand Canyon is the world's largest gorge. It measures 466km in length, 29km in width and 1.6km in depth.

It took the Colorado River ten million years to carve this canyon, which really is a complex of tens of thousands of gorges, in the Kaibab Plateau, separating the North from the South Rim. The process still continues.

The National Park was established here in 1919 and has attracted



*Beavertail cactus, NPS Photo*

record numbers of visitors: 5 million a year.

**Toroweap Overlook (front cover)**, with its 3000-foot high sandstone face, is one of the most recognizable landmarks of the Grand Canyon and one in a chain of other exotic names, such as Hopi Point, Confucius Temple, Shiva Temple, Tower of Ra.

The abyss that divides the Rims has also divided some species and led to the appearance of

new variations, e.g. two subspecies of tassel-eared squirrels, which once were one species.

Examples of Grand Canyon flora:

riverside willow, cottonwoods, shrubs, wildflowers, ponderosa pine and fauna: condors, Grand Canyon rattlesnake, deer, foxes, bobcats.

*Text by AIRC Krakow*

# GRAND CANYON, Arizona



*Boating down the Colorado River below Havasu Creek in Grand Canyon  
Mark Lellouch, NPS Photo*



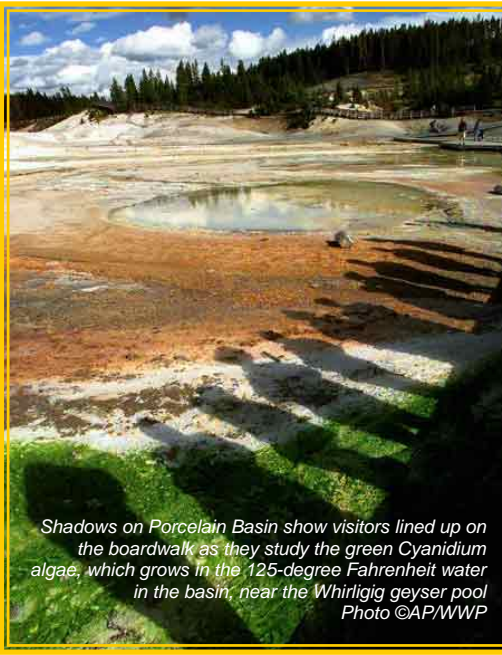
*Rainbow in the Grand Canyon as seen from near Mather Point on the South Rim,  
Grand Canyon N.P. NPS Photo.*



*California Condor  
Mark Lellouch, NPS Photo.*



# YELLOWSTONE, Wyoming, Idaho, Montana



Shadows on Porcelain Basin show visitors lined up on the boardwalk as they study the green *Cyanidium* algae, which grows in the 125-degree Fahrenheit water in the basin, near the Whirligig geyser pool  
Photo ©AP/WWP

More than twice the size of the Grand Canyon (almost 900,000 ha), **Yellowstone** spreads out over three states: Wyoming, Idaho and Montana. It was the first national park established in the USA in 1872. This unique area is studded with thousands of geothermal wonders such as steaming geysers, cauldrons of bubbling mud, hot springs, fumaroles and smaller vents. It all began about 600,000 years ago with a great volcanic eruption, which ravaged the plateau. Today, an active underground volcano still melts the rock and produces magma which heats the surface waters, forcing them up through the



A Grizzly bear inside Yellowstone National Park, photo provided by the National Park Service.  
Photo ©AP/WWP

earth. The most famous geyser, Old Faithful, erupts every 80 minutes. The world's tallest geyser, Echinus, can shoot up water to an incredible 400 feet when active, while the world's tallest predictable geyser, Grand, sends jets up to 200 feet.

Yellowstone has its own Grand Canyon at the mouth of the Yellowstone River - which gave the name to the whole park - with gorgeous waterfalls and cascades.



A gray wolf pauses in Yellowstone National Park in Wyoming, after being fitted with a radio collar, Jan. 9, 2003.  
Photo ©AP/WWP

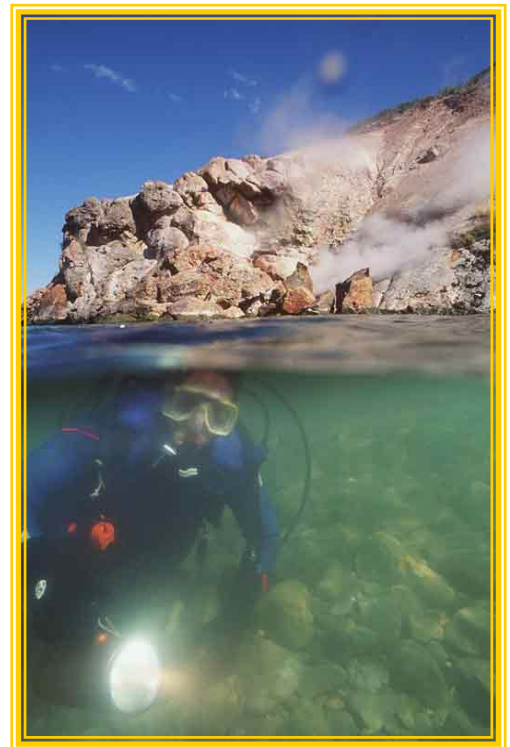
Yellowstone has always been an inspiration to artists. A 19th-century painter, Thomas Moran, made a number of sketches and paintings featuring Yellowstone's beauty spots. His name is just one in a long list of artists who played an essential part in promoting the idea of creating natural reserves.



Fumarole near Lodge Geyser & Black Growler Steam Vent; Jim Peaco; February 1998

Last but not least, it should be said that Yellowstone is a wildlife sanctuary. It is home to more than 90 species of mammals and 300 species of birds. The once endangered grey wolf and bison were successfully restored. Yellowstone is inhabited by about 250 grizzlies, which feed on cutthroat trout, another rare species in Yellowstone.

To learn more about national parks in the USA visit: <http://www.nps.gov/> or become a webranger: <http://www.nps.gov/>



Yellowstone National Park Ranger Gary Nelson explores thermal vents at Mary Bay at Yellowstone Lake  
Photo ©AP/WWP

## Win a Prize!

To win a prize answer this question:

**What is the height of Mount McKinley in meters?**

Send your answer to [irc@embusa.es](mailto:irc@embusa.es)

Give your name and address.

The deadline is September 30, 2006.

## Good Luck!

The winners from the previous issue will soon receive their prizes by mail.

# ZOOM

IN ON THE USA

## About ZOOM

Zoom is online at  
[www.embusa.es/irc/zoom.html](http://www.embusa.es/irc/zoom.html)

Contact us at  
[irc@embusa.es](mailto:irc@embusa.es)

### US Information Resource Centers

**Madrid**  
Embajada de EE. UU.  
C/ Serrano, 75  
28006 Madrid

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Consulado General de EE. UU.  
Pº Reina Elisenda de Montcada, 23  
08034 Barcelona

# DENALI, Alaska



An indisputable attraction of Denali National Park (*Denali* - an Indian name meaning *The Great One*) is Mount McKinley, the highest mountain in North America (20,320 feet). Its proud peak, often enveloped in clouds or mist, has lured climbers and painters alike. For more than 70 of these first adventurers, the mountain turned out to be deadly; avalanches, low temperatures, crevasses and fierce winds can claim lives of even the bravest and most skilled mountaineers. For the latter, McKinley has been much kinder. It is said that every artist who has visited the area has

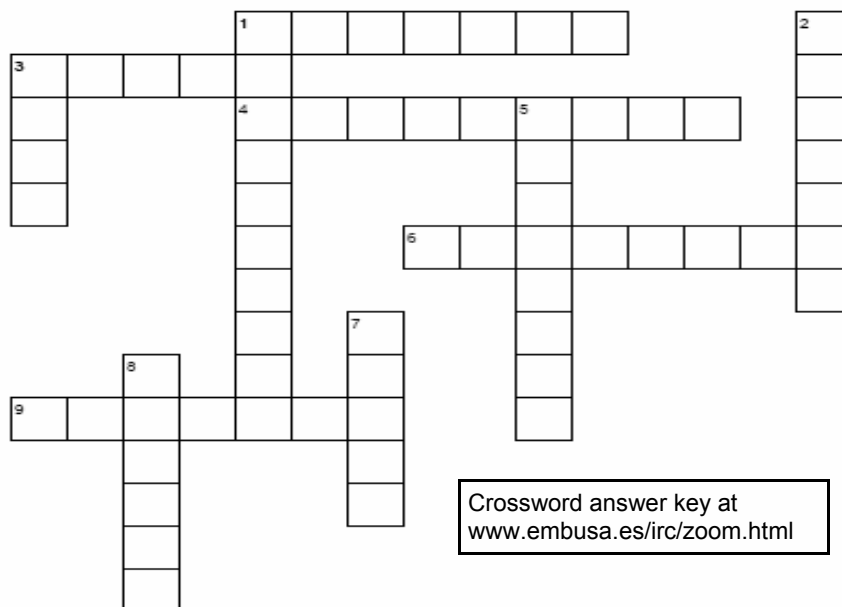
painted or sketched the famous mountain.

Denali National Park welcomes and indeed encourages artists to spend some creative time in its territory. It is one of 29 parks participating in "Artist-In-Residence" programs. From June to mid-September selected artists come to Denali and stay 10 days in accommodation provided by the Park - the East Fork cabin. The cabin is located in a dramatic setting between two mountain passes and is equipped with an outhouse, propane heater, range, oven, refrigerator, bunk beds and cooking utensils. There is no electricity or running water. The closest available showers are at the Toklat Ranger Station 12 miles from the cabin - a bit far for an after-supper-jog, but the artists are supposed to take in a real dose of wilderness.

In return for an opportunity to stay, artists are expected to donate an original piece of work to Denali Park. In this way nature and art inspire and influence each other.

Text by AIRC Krakow. Edited by IRC Madrid

## Geology Crossword



Crossword answer key at  
[www.embusa.es/irc/zoom.html](http://www.embusa.es/irc/zoom.html)

### ACROSS

1. To eat away rocks or soil.
3. Flat plain of sediment deposited at the mouth of a river.
4. A massive downward movement of rocks.
6. A massive downward movement of wet mud.
9. A raised, flat landform.

### DOWN

1. A trembling of the Earth, a tremor.
2. A large body of ice that gradually moves across land.
3. A large pile of sand left by the wind is called a sand \_\_\_\_.
5. Natural feature of the Earth's surface.
7. The surface of the Earth.
8. A valley that is deep and narrow.